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HARNACK'S "PROBABILIA" CONCERNING THE ADDRESS AND THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

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The year 1900 saw a new and vigorous impulse given to the critical examination of the Epistle to the Hebrews by the publications of Harnack's *Probabilia*. While his hypothesis has not gained any general acceptance, he has found a ready following in his endeavor to discover *to whom the epistle is addressed*. It is his conjecture concerning the *authorship*—i. e., that this is to be attributed to Prisca and her husband Aquila—which has met with opposition not only on the part of exegetes of the apologetic school, to whom the idea of a new Testament epistle emanating from a woman is offensive, but also on the part of unprejudiced investigators. By the latter Harnack's startling conjecture has been either distrustfully received or coolly ignored.¹

It is readily admitted that the authorship by Prisca possesses, in comparison with all previous conjectures, the weight of probability. It is also admitted that everything formerly accepted in favor of Apollos' authorship argues equally for Prisca, while certain particulars which argue against the authorship of Apollos favor Prisca. Finally, it is admitted that absolutely nothing positive can be adduced *against* the Prisca hypothesis. With admirably keen insight Harnack points out that Prisca was once before robbed of her right of authorship in the New Testament² by some ancient catholicizing text-

¹ This attitude is well illustrated by Arnold Meyer's article in the *Theologischer Jahresbericht*, 1900, p. 268.

² In weighing this argument it is not enough to test Harnack's deduction in the "Probabilia" alone (*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Vol. I (1900), pp. 16-41; *Lutheran Church Review*, July, 1900; this must be compared with his article "Ueber die beiden Recensionen der Geschichte der Prisca und des Aquila in Act, Ap. 18:1-27" (*Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften*, January 11, 1900), in which the problem is discussed on a broader basis.

corrupter who, by emendation of the genuine text, attributed to other authors the epistle in which Prisca and Aquila commended Apollos to the Corinthian congregation (Acts 18:27).

But theologians have been reluctant to draw an analogous conclusion in the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews; not because Harnack's particular arguments were questioned; not because there was any lack of probability; nor because any attempt was made to point out defects in his chain of arguments. On the contrary, mere astonishment was expressed that Harnack should have attempted any such examination. That he should venture on this uncertain ground of speculation as to authorship was disapproved of from principle. It would have been more acceptable if he had exercised the *ars nescientiae* upon this dark question of authorship.

However justifiable may be this disinclination of exact science to search for the authors of ancient anonymous or pseudonymous writings, this disinclination seems out of place in the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Two weighty facts appear to impel us to abandon the resigned attitude of the *ars nescientiae*, to abandon the formula, *τίς δὲ ὁ γράψας τὴν πείστολὴν τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς θεὸς οἶδεν*, and to join Harnack, or one of his many predecessors, in trying to ascertain the author of the epistle: (1) The anonymity of the Epistle to the Hebrews is unique in the New Testament and its kindred literature; (2) the circle of Paul's friends is so well known that it would be surprising if, from among its many names, that of the author *ad Hebraeos* did not somewhere appear. The acceptance of these two facts alone is sufficient to prevent one from objecting on principle to Harnack's undertaking, and in support of them several points may be urged.

Innumerable literary works of Christian antiquity have, indeed, come down to us without their real author's name. But how many of them are anonymous? Do not those which lack the real name bear at least a pseudonym? In this matter of pseudonymity, three points are to be noted: either these writings were originally written under the assumed name; or there has been the substitution of a name more desirable for one less acceptable; or, finally, there is the rare case where a real name has been accidentally lost and a new name has been supplied. In such cases, however, there has

been no long delay in placing the nameless writing among the works of a recognized author, and thus they have been handed down.

It is a well-known fact that pseudonymity has a different significance in different classes of literature. In apocalyptic literature it is, for example, entirely conventional. A genuine apocalypse must be pseudepigraphic or a defect is felt. In the case of epistles, however, the situation is different. Here more than anywhere else the genuineness, or the apparent genuineness, of the author's name is of importance. A *Tendenz* is invariably responsible for pseudonymity in this class of literature, even when tradition does not go so far as it did in the case of the Epistle to Diognetus, which it rescued from its orphaned condition by giving it Justin as its father. This is as true of the Epistle of Aristeeas as of the Pastoral Epistles in their present form; as true of the Epistle of Jude as of the Epistle of Peter to James, found in the Clementine Homilies. Because of the personal interest attaching to every epistle, it is natural that the author's name never assumes greater importance than in any other type of literature. The writer of a pseudonymous *epistle*, or the one who substitutes in an *epistle* a pseudonym³ for the true author's name, lays claim to the personal authority of the assumed author for his own directions, commissions and commands, his teachings and his testimonies, to a far greater degree than do the apocalyptic writers who pose as prophets, or even the evangelists, who speak as eyewitnesses. For between the evangelists or the apocalyptic writer, and his reader there stand the facts, the narratives, and the secrets which he sets forth; but nothing stands between the writer of an epistle and the person to whom it is written. He speaks directly as man to man addressing the reader as "thou."

In the light of these observations, the anonymity of the Epistle to the Hebrews appears so peculiar and so abnormal that it urgently demands an explanation. For why has the process indicated above

³ The third possibility—that the pseudonymity may be due to accidental loss of the author's name—hardly needs mention; for, in the case of letters, the author's name is, indeed, more important, and easier to preserve than in other forms of literature. Now, the more important a thing is, the better it will be preserved, and the less likely it is to become lost. The appearance of a new spurious name, is then, far more frequently due to the correction of the old, genuine name than to the loss of one; at least, this is the case with letters.

stopped half way in the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews? Why has just this epistle lost its author's name without the substitution of a better one? This abnormal condition is not to be explained as due to an accidental mutilation of the original manuscript, since to such explanation is opposed the above-mentioned custom of supplying all accidentally anonymous epistles with an author's name—for one is interested in reading a letter only when one knows who is addressing the reader as "thou."

One perfectly definite fact, however, tells against all such attempts at explanation. Had accident robbed the Epistle to the Hebrews of its address and its author's name, it might be expected that, where the letter was first known, the effort would have been made to discover its author. But exactly the opposite is true. The Epistle of Clement shows that it was in Rome that the Epistle to the Hebrews was best known in the earliest times. Now, in Rome there was the strongest objection to the assumption of a Pauline authorship for the anonymous epistle. Eusebius makes concerning our ἐπιστολή the noteworthy remark: πρὸς τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίας ὥς μὴ Παύλου οὐσαν ἀντιλέγεσθαι.⁴ The Epistle to the Hebrews was there no more successful in gaining currency as the work of Barnabas than as the work of Paul.⁵

We can only suppose that the early church had reasons for here departing from its practice in the case of every other epistle. As above in the case of pseudonymity, so here in the case of anonymity, we must conclude that there is a *Tendenz*.

But, if we once admit the possibility that a *Tendenz* may be the ground for anonymity, we cannot deny that Harnack's *Prisca* hypothesis furnishes complete and satisfying solution.

That a parochial letter from a *woman* should have circulated in the ancient catholic world, is impossible. But if put into circulation about the year 100, from Rome, whither *Prisca* had sent it at most two or three decades earlier, it would not be possible there (even with the best intention of perpetrating a pious fraud) to stamp it as an epistle of Paul or of Barnabas. At that time in Rome, the true

⁴ *H. E.*, III, 3:5.

⁵ Cf. Hausleiter ("Zeugnis des *Tractatus de libris* für Barnabas") *Theologisches Literaturblatt*, Vol. XXIII (1900), p. 127.

state of the case cannot have been unknown. It was left ἀπάτωρ because it was not ἀμήτωρ, and ἀπάτωρ the epistle has remained. But it was never ἀγενεαλόγητος. The genealogy of the epistle points so clearly to the circle of Paul's sympathizers and fellow-workers, that there can be no doubt as to where the author is to be sought. The Epistle to the Hebrews is influenced to a greater degree by Paul than is 1 Peter or the Gospel of John.

While not many facts concerning Paul's collaborators have been handed down to us, many of their names have nevertheless been preserved. Only by assuming that tradition has omitted one of the greatest names, or that the author *ad Hebraeos* is not to be reckoned among the greatest names of primitive Christianity, could we suppose that he had been entirely forgotten among Paul's many helpers mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, or among the many who greet and are greeted in the Pauline literature. This would be, to say the least, a very remarkable chance occurrence. However important a rôle "chance occurrence" may play in reality, it is a mistake to regard "chance occurrence" as the determining factor in methodical investigation. The existence of so many things which entirely elude our accurate knowledge brings so much unavoidable uncertainty into our reckonings that to introduce chance occurrence *as the chief factor* in our calculations would almost guarantee the incorrectness of the result. For example, we should never arrive at the truth by assuming that chance occurrence is responsible for the abrupt ending of the Acts, or the loss of the closing verses of Mark. The same judgment must be passed upon the "chance occurrence" that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews should have disappeared from all early Christian literature. Whoever does not wish to exaggerate our ignorance of the apostolic age, or to make an unknown chance occurrence into a directing force in the history of the Epistle to the Hebrews, will join all preceding scholars in their search for its author among the names contained in the Pauline epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles.

Thus the chief objections to Harnack's investigation seem to me to be set aside. His arguments for the probability of Prisca's authorship can now stand forth in all their convincing power. To recount them here in detail seems unnecessary; for not only are they

accessible to everyone, in his "Probabilia;" but the individual arguments have not yet been seriously disputed.

In this connection one special thing in particular should be constantly kept in mind by both defenders and opponents of Harnack's *Prisca* hypothesis; Harnack has not proposed it in order to base upon it some constructive theory pertaining to the history of primitive Christianity. Nor is it his primary purpose to clear up any obscure point for the curious. But when, after examining such a point, he says, "It is probable that *Prisca* and *Aquila* wrote the epistle," he intends primarily thus to characterize the peculiar nature of the special *milieu* which is reflected in the epistle. The name *Prisca* calls up in memory an entire system of related ideas, each one of which facilitates our understanding of the letter. Even he who doubts the probability of Harnack's hypothesis will not deny that thus used the word *Prisca* gives *in nuce* a commentary on the whole epistle—a commentary unsurpassable in brevity and in clearness. Thus Harnack will have attained, in the case even of the doubter—his chief purpose in advancing the *Prisca* hypothesis, a purpose concerning which I have no objection to offer.

At another point, however, Harnack has left a problem still unsolved. While I regard as probable his generally doubted conclusions concerning the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, I wish, in what follows, to subject to a critical test his generally approved discussion as to the persons addressed, and to carry the investigation somewhat farther. I would especially add that, while my work in its results fits, in every respect, into Harnack's *Prisca* hypothesis, still it nowhere presupposes this hypothesis, the working value of which is, in spite of its probability, not very great. On the contrary, my work is essentially based upon observations which have nothing to do with that hypothesis. The results will, therefore, have an independent value.

Harnack stands on firm ground in adopting the opinion advanced by Wetstein, defended by Alford,⁶ and established by Holtzmann, i. e., that the Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed to readers in Rome. Furthermore, he accepts Zahn's sound position that the recipients of the epistle were a small circle of persons "uniform in condition

⁶ *The Greek Testament*, Vol. IV, 1 (1859), pp. lxii f.

and conviction," a circle of Christians of long-standing, one of the several house congregations within the metropolitan Roman church. To the arguments making for Rome I need merely refer.⁷ That not the whole of the Roman church, but rather one of its "house congregations," was the recipient of the letter is probable from the following considerations: The individual character of the epistle is unmistakable. It shows the readers to have formed a circle very definite and concrete, but *homogeneous* in religious and moral constitution. "Nowhere does the writer recognize groups, differences, or anything of the sort" (Harnack). One cannot say to a general congregation, *οφείλοντες εἶναι διδάσκαλοι διὰ τὸν χρόνον, πάλιν χρεῖαν ἔχετε τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς*; on the contrary, such an admonition can apply only to a definite circle of experienced Christians, not containing new converts or immature disciples. Such references to *personal* experiences as those in 10:32 f. and 13:7 do not fit a large and mixed community, but a limited and personal congregation. According to 13:24, the readers are to greet *all ἡγούμενοι*, while just before this they are commanded to obey *their ἡγούμενοι*. Probably the leaders of the general congregation and the leaders of the more limited *ἐπισυναγωγῇ* are here set in contrast.

But have we from other writings any evidence that there were such house congregations in Rome? From Rom., chap. 16, it is to be inferred that there were at that time at least three such in Rome: that of Prisca and Aquila (vss. 3-5), that of Asyncritus (vs. 14), and that of Philologus (vs. 15).⁸

To these considerations Harnack now adds a negative argument. In accordance with the present tendency, he gives up the superscription *πρὸς Ἑβραίους*, and considers it impossible that it represents the original address. At the same time, he believes that the

⁷ Heb. 13:24 (*ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας*); 13:7, 17, 24 (*ἡγούμενοι* of I Clement and *προηγούμενοι* in Hermas); 10:32 sq. and 13:7 (persecution and martyrdom of *ἡγούμενοι*). Use of the epistle in I Clement.

⁸ Ernst von Dobschütz says in his recent work, *Die urchristlichen Gemeinden*: "That there continued to be separate congregations within the [Roman] church is a natural supposition, based on the growth of the city and the probable large size of the Christian community, and is attested for a still later time by Hermas. Hence the impression made by the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it was not written to the whole Roman congregation, but to a definite circle, to a house congregation." (*Loc. cit.*, p. 140.)

title could not well have been lost if addressed to the whole Roman congregation. He thinks a more particular address could have been lost more easily than a general one from which the superscription *πρὸς Ῥωμαίους* could be taken. With this, however, I cannot agree. Whether the address read *πρὸς Φιλόλογον*, or *πρὸς τοὺς σὺν Ἀσσυγκρίτῳ ἁγίους*, or however it may have read, such a title⁹ is no more exposed to mutilation, in the literal or in the figurative sense—than are the words *πρὸς Ῥωμαίους*, or their equivalent.

Since Harnack's other observations are correct, one must choose either (1) to attribute the loss of the address to an unfortunate accident; or (2) to combine it with the loss of the author's name (in which case it is customary to attribute the addition of the present address to a misunderstanding—that is, to something desperately like accident); or (3) to revise fundamentally the arguments which have been brought against the superscription *πρὸς Ἑβραίους*.

It is methodically correct to work first on the basis of the third suggestion, viz., to ascertain whether we may not *abide by tradition* and turn to the other two only when this attempt fails. For *πρὸς Ἑβραίους* (mentioned first by the "presbyter" of Clement)¹⁰ is strongly attested by all tradition. Not alone the tradition which ascribes the epistle to Paul, but also that which attributes it to Barnabas, hands down the same *πρὸς Ἑβραίους*. It is especially to be noted that the epistle *may* very well be addressed to Romans and at the same time "to the Hebrews." This possibility was excluded so long as the readers were supposed to be an entire metropolitan church. If, however, we assume a small circle within the general community, there remains absolutely nothing to urge against the possibility that it may have been called *ἐπισυναγωγή* ¹¹ *Ἑβραίων*.

But was this possible *in Rome*? and is it consistent with the contents of the epistle?

In a Roman inscription we find a reference to a *συναγωγή ΑΙΒΡΕΩΝ* (= *Ἑβραίων*) as existing there. We have, to be sure, only the name.¹² We do not know whether it was Jewish or Christian, in what century it existed, nor in what sense the name "Hebrew" was

⁹ Compare note 23. ¹⁰ Eus., *H. E.*, VI, 14:4. ¹¹ Heb. 10:25.

¹² *C. I. G. n.* 9909; Schürer, *Die Gemeindeverfassung der Juden in Rom* (1879), p. 35.

applied to it, but the mere fact of its existence is suggestive, and something can be gathered from the contents of the inscription. The names it contains, Gadias (Gadiapater?) and Salome, are Hebrew. But if this synagogue were a congregation of *Hebrew-speaking* Jews, then the Greek wording of the inscription would have been offensive. It is true that the whole Roma Sotteranea has not one entirely Hebrew inscription, but this is easily explained by the fact that the Hebrew congregation, like all others, had lost the Hebrew mother-tongue. They certainly did not take the name because of a conservative disposition especially to cherish the Hebrew language among themselves. Were this the case, then at least the שלום which sometimes occurs, would not be lacking from the grave of the ΣΑΛΩ (μη)¹³ ΘΥΓΑΤΗΡ ΓΑΔΙΑ ΠΑΤΡΟΣ ΣΤΝΑΓΩΓΗΣ ΑΙΒΡΕΩΝ.

If, accordingly, the improbability, or even the impossibility, of rendering 'Εβραῖοι "Hebrew-speaking" in the case of the synagogue at Rome is as great as the generally conceded impossibility that the Epistle to the Hebrews should be addressed to readers familiar with the Hebrew language, then there arises a further question, whether 'Εβραῖοι in its other meaning, "people of Jewish descent," is here applicable? Applied to that synagogue, the question is an idle one.¹⁴ But can 'Εβραῖοι in the title of the epistle signify Jews in the national sense?

Zahn, the investigator whom Harnack has followed in so many decisive points, assumes that the intended readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews were, in general, of Jewish birth. If so, the traditional address (which, by the way, even Zahn rejects) would best accord with Zahn's conclusion as to the circle of readers—contemplated in the epistle. This point, however, he can not establish. The recipients of the epistle can scarcely all have been Jews by birth, for Zahn himself remarks:

¹³ Is it, moreover, certain that ΣΑΛΩ is to be restored as Salome? Is it not, perhaps, to be read ΣΑΛΩΜ = שלום? The substitution of the Greek for the Hebrew letters would also go to prove that the synagogue of the Hebrews put no value on the written and spoken Hebrew. Had linguistic tendencies had any real significance in the synagogue, there would have been a stone mason at hand who could cut שלום.

¹⁴ Possibly one might conclude from analogy that here also it has no restricted meaning, and thus does not exclude proselytes. But even this conclusion from analogy is suspicious; the lexicographical meaning of 'Εβραῖοι is too variable; e. g., we cannot on the basis of analogy argue from the congregation addressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews to that implied in the Gospel according to the Hebrews.

The author is writing to Christians, who from the time of their conversion (from Judaism) have had nothing to do with a Jewish sacrificial cult. . . . In the whole Epistle to the Hebrews there is not the slightest suggestion of any past or impending relapse of the readers into a Jewish cult. . . . The author does not touch upon the question as to what judgment is to be passed upon the union of Christian confession with legalistic practices.¹⁵

The above observations upon the content and tendency of the Epistle to the Hebrews are correct; but they do not harmonize with Zahn's own supposition that the readers of the letter were of Jewish nationality; on the contrary, they exclude it. For, if the readers were "exclusively of Jewish descent," they would be especially exposed, because of their ancestral religion, to the dangers of Judaism. But the Epistle to the Hebrews does not enter into the Judaistic dangers. Nay, more, it speaks of the superiority of Christ to Moses and to Aaron, in a tone free from any trace of former Jewish faith, or of regret over the loss of former prerogative. The law, too, receives at his hands such "academic treatment"¹⁶ as would be inconceivable if addressed to a circle of readers to whom the law had formerly been the one exclusive reality. Moreover, the persons to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed are not interested in the questions which formerly stirred Jewish Christianity—the question of the binding force of the law for non-Jews, of the equality of circumcision and uncircumcision, and of similar problems. Since the path of the writer to the Hebrews often led close to these problems without attracting his attention to them; since, moreover, the readers, as already indicated, are maturer Christians, into whose earlier life the Pauline struggle between gentile emancipation from the law and Jewish prerogative must have penetrated, the best explanation for this indifference is found in supposing that for these Christians such questions, at a time even earlier than this (indeed, when the struggle was on), were matters of personal indifference; that the antinomian problem had marked no epoch in their lives; that they were by no means *exclusively* Jews; and that, if there were Jews (or, in the wider sense, former adherents of the Jewish religion) among them, these must have been long since emancipated, liberal,

¹⁵ *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, Vol. II (1899), pp. 136 f.

¹⁶ Holtzmann, *Einleitung* (1892), p. 300.

and free from the law. *Nationalistic* Judaism, in particular, can have had, for them, no significance at all.

But possibly a *religious* Judaism! A few words on this point. In an *ἐπισυναγωγή*, where the Bible is to so high a degree an object of sacred reverence and devotion; where the liturgical songs, the Psalms, were so familiar; where there can have been no lack of practical acquaintance with specifically Jewish wisdom and modes of thinking—in such a communion we may well assume a large percentage of people who were grounded in these things before their conversion; indeed, from their youth up. Although Harnack may be right as regards the *individual* believer when he says: "One cannot and must not place a limit upon the ardor with which the native Gentile, when once he became a Christian, appropriated the Old Testament and adopted its contents to be his possession, his history, his genealogy," nevertheless a body of individuals is more unwieldy than an individual, and one must "place a limit" in the case of a whole group of believers, and say that in a *συναγωγή* such fervent Biblicism is conceivable only when for a large number of the group—and those the intellectual leaders—reverence for the Bible is something not acquired, but native. Thus the Biblicism of the Epistle to the Hebrews compels us to suppose among its readers a considerable number of people who had grown up in the Jewish religion, but who, as has been shown, can nevertheless, not have been trained in the severity of the law. Not Aaron, but Melchisedek, must always have been their priestly-religious ideal.

In the light of these various considerations, we cannot escape the conclusion that the congregation for which this epistle was intended had a *syncretistic* character, and that their Christianity was not of a pharisaical order, but, rather, the outgrowth of a liberal Hellenistic Judaism, which had settled the question of the validity of the law, not from contact with Christian missions, but rather because of their own propaganda among the "gentiles," and had done this, not in a fundamentally antinomian, but in a practical, conciliatory sense.

That there were such Jewish religious freethinkers—indeed, many of them—must be generally admitted since Schürer's investigation "Die Juden im bosporianischen Reiche und die Genossen-

schaften der σεβόμενοι θεὸν ὑψιστον ebendasselbst."¹⁷ He shows that in Tanais, under Jewish influence, religious societies were formed which cherished exclusively the cult of the θεὸς ὑψιστος.

The religion of these "brethren" was neither Judaism nor paganism, but a neutralized form of both. From Jewish teachers they learned σεβέσθαι θεὸν ὑψιστον. Since they did not, as was the custom, in other places, remain in the position of Jews of the second rank as dependents of Jewish congregations, but formed an independent organization, they at the same time absorbed, or retained, Greek elements. . . . This process is instructive for the earliest history of Christianity. There are certain indications that the formation of non-legalistic pagan-Christian congregations was not exclusively the work of Paul. This process seems to have been favored in many places—for example, in Rome—by the fact that the preaching of Christ found especial acceptance in the circles of the σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν. Since these circles, which had appropriated only isolated elements of Jewish legalism, dissolved their connection with the Jewish synagogues and formed independent congregations, an entire rejection of the law could easily arise.

This description reads as if especially designed to set forth the peculiarities of the very ἐπισυναγωγή to which the Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed. An outgrowth from Judaism—and yet essentially gentile! Especially devoted to the sacred religious code of the Jews—and yet free from the law! If the Christian congregation of the Epistle to the Hebrews—for the expression "house congregation" is no longer altogether fitting—developed from such a religious association, or even a similar syncretistic one, then it is easy to see how so rich a religious inheritance from Judaism is compatible with the apparent absence of any acute interest in specific Jewish and Judaistic controversial questions.

Moreover, if this congregation is an original organization existing beside the non-legalistic Pauline churches, a clear light falls upon the origin of our epistle in addition to the Pauline epistles. It then furnishes no "modified Paulinism," but original conceptions, when, instead of the Pauline antithesis of law and grace, it sets forth the contrast between the imperfect shadow and the perfect reality; or when, in the place of the suffering and dying Christ, Christ as the dispenser of future blessings becomes the central point of the dis-

¹⁷ *Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Vol. III, No. 3 (1897); cf. Cumont, "Hypsistos," *supplément à la Revue de l'instruction publique en Belgique*, 1877, and "Friedländer, *Der vorchristliche jüdische Gnosticismus*" (Göttingen, 1898; interesting, but to be used with great caution).

pensation. The Hellenistic-Jewish thread in the web of the Christian thought of this epistle no longer appears to be a hellenizing of Paulinism, but rather an element just as original as the pharisaic thread which Paul has woven into the fabric of ancient Christianity.

Before going farther, let us make three observations, not in themselves of great weight, but nevertheless, not without significance in this connection. In *Pontus* the cultus of the *θεὸς ὑψιστος* had its rise and its widest dissemination. When Claudius drove from Rome the Jews *impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes*, it was a man of Pontus, Aquila by name, who with his wife Prisca was forced to take refuge in Corinth. I shall not here urge Harnack's Prisca-hypothesis, but is there not a strong possibility that this *Pontian* Jew Aquila—the only exile whose name we know—through devotion to Christ created a disturbance in the Roman religious association of the *σεβόμενοι*¹⁸? Surely, there was communication enough between the Pontian and the Roman worshipers of the *θεὸς ὑψιστος*. What we otherwise know of Aquila and Prisca gives color to the supposition that they made use of such communication; instance their conversion of Apollos.

It is, moreover, related in the Acts of the Apostles that Aquila performed a religious ceremony which has hitherto been an unsolved riddle of exegesis. This riddle is explained if understood in the *milieu* of a syncretistic religion:

Ὁ Παῦλος, so runs Acts 18: 18, ἐξέπλει εἰς τὴν Συρίαν καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ Πρίσκιλλα καὶ Ἀκύλας, κειράμενος ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς τὴν κεφαλὴν· εἶχεν γὰρ εὐχὴν.

Aquila, then (for to him, not to Paul,¹⁹ the *κειράμενος* most probably refers), sacrificed his hair, according to a custom not uncommon among Jews and heathen. In his case it may well have been a

¹⁸ We must beware of identifying religious associations, mentioned here and later, with the synagogues, house congregations, etc. At that time of intermingling of religions, such organizations sprang up like mushrooms. Accordingly the investigator will get nearest to the truth, not by the method of identification, but by that of differentiation. On the other hand, the different congregations resemble one another, and among those of like tendencies, we may expect in many regards a close analogy.

¹⁹ As against Harnack, who concludes, from the difference in the readings *κειράμενος*, and *ὁς ἐκέρατο*, that the first expression imposes the vow upon Paul, the second absolves him. Rather the first imposes the vow upon *Aquila*; the second is meant only to make the first clearer and to guard against misunderstanding.

so-called "great vow," a vow after escape from death, such as Philo thus describes:

ὅταν ἀπάρξωνταί τινες ἀπὸ παντὸς μέρους κτήσεως ἀνιερώσαντες, μηκέτι δὲ ἔχοντες ὕλας, ἐν αἷς διαθήσονται τὴν εὐσέβειαν, αὐτοὺς ἀνατιθέασι καὶ καθιερούσιν, ἀλεκτον ἐπιδεικνύμενοι ὁσιότητα καὶ ὑπερβολὴν τινα γνώμης φιλοθέου. διὸ καὶ μεγάλη προσηκόν τως εὐχὴ καλεῖται. κτημάτων γὰρ μέγιστον αὐτός τίς ἐστίν αὐτῷ, οὗ παραχωρεῖ καὶ ἐξίσταται.

For deliverance this sacrifice is offered:

διότι τὸν σωτήρα ὄντως θεὸν ἐπιγέγραπται τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτίον. ἐπεὶ δ' αὐτὸν ἠΐστα προσαγαγεῖν, τὸν δὲ ἱερὸν βωμὸν οὐ θέμις αἵματι ἀνθρωπίνῳ μαινεσθαι, ἔδει δέ τι πάντως μέρος ἱερουργηθῆναι, ἔσπουδασε λαβεῖν, ὅπερ ἀφαιρεθῆν οὐτ' ἀλγηδόνας οὐτε λώβην ἀπεργάζεται. τοῦ γὰρ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα. φυσικοῦ, καθάπερ δένδρου περιττοὺς κλάδους, τὰς τῆς κεφαλῆς τρίχας ἀπέκειρε καὶ παρέδωκε πυρί.

Such religious acts are also common to all peoples: *ταῦτα κοινὰ τῶν ἄλλων*.²⁰

Comparing these words of Philo's with our other observations, the incidental notice in Acts, of Aquila's sacrifice of his hair seems to gain life and significance. We get an insight into the sphere of religious thoughts and feelings by which this Hellenistic-Jewish believer in Christ was actuated. Rescued from great danger, he dedicates himself to the god who rescued him. For this he chooses a rite not distinctively Jewish, but common to the Greeks as well.²¹ He performs the ceremony at a place which the orthodox Jew would not select for this purpose. Such a one could sacrifice his hair only at the sacred altar at Jerusalem. Unquestionably this rite, composed of Jewish and of Hellenistic elements, recalls the syncretistic votive inscriptions so often erected by the *σεβόμενοι τὸν θεὸν ὕψιστον* in Aquila's native land.

Finally, our third brief consideration. These Judaized religious associations existed for the worship of the *θεὸς ὕψιστος*. Had they priests? We do not know. But we know that they had the sacred books.²² From these they all knew *one ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὕψιστου*, namely, Melchisedek. May there not be a connection between

²⁰ *De victimis*, 13, 14; Mangey, II, 249 f. ²¹ Cf. *Iliad*, XXIII, 140-53.

²² The language of the inscription examined by Schürer is influenced by the Bible. These associations had not given up the ancient sacred book.

this and the Melchisedek speculation in the Epistle to the Hebrews?

However this may be on linguistic grounds, all these combinations seem to testify rather against than for the genuineness²³ of the address *πρὸς Ἑβραίους*. Does linguistic usage, indeed, permit the application of the term *συναγωγή Ἑβραίων* to such a Judaized, but yet syncretistic, association?

Ἑβραῖοι, it is said, signifies either the language or the nation (cf. above, p. —). These *σεβόμενοι* certainly did not use the Hebrew *tongue* in their congregation. Moreover, there was in the ancient world no room for such a tendency. Neither were they native Hebrews—at least very few of them were—but the majority were of heathen extraction and professed the Jewish *religion*, although not without reservation. Now, in what sense can the name “Hebrew” describe such a congregation?

The Epistle to the Hebrews itself gives us a clue. More than any other writing of the New Testament, it emphasizes the idea that its readers are the “people of god” (*λαὸς θεοῦ* and *λαός* used absolutely, Heb. 2:17; 4:9; 5:3; 7:27; 8:10; 9:7, 19; 10:30; 11:25; 13:12), that they are the “seed of Abraham” (2:6; 11:18). This signifies not the nationality, but the *religion* of the readers.

But cannot *οἱ Ἑβραῖοι* actually have the same sense as *λαὸς θεοῦ* or *σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ* in the epistle? Is it simply to designate the people according to language and nation? In my opinion, Carpzov long ago was right in saying: “*Hebraeorum nomen religionem magis designasse, Judaeorum vero et Israelitarum generis magis ac gentis fuisse.*”²⁴ If so, *οἱ Ἑβραῖοι* is not only a possible name, but is the most fitting of these three. For this name was used by those who were *μὴ γενεαλογούμενοι*, but merely Abraham’s heirs religiously.

Now, the first man whom the Bible calls “Hebrew” is Abram; and this occurs in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, which is so important for the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is Abram, the Hebrew,

²³ The discussion is not concerning genuineness in the sense of whether the superscription is to be attributed to the author, but whether from the first it has correctly designated the person addressed. In this linguistic use the address “to the Romans,” for example, is genuine, although Paul certainly did not apply to his epistle the words *Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους* as superscription. This *Πρὸς Ἑβραίους* can, therefore, not have been given to our epistle before other epistles were in circulation.

²⁴ *Prolegomena ad Exercit. Philon. in Ep. ad Hebr.*, pp. 3 f.

אַבְרָם הַעֲבֵרִי, Ἀβραμ ὁ περάτης (LXX), who accomplishes the deliverance, and brings the tithes to Melchisedek, the priest of the θεὸς ὑψιστος.

The antinomian sects, the Cainites, the Sethites, the Melchisedekians, were accustomed to choose their *Heros eponymos* from among men who, living prior to Moses, were free from the law. In the light of this same tendency the Abraham speculation of Paul is to be understood. Taken in this sense, can a more appropriate appellation be found for the non-legalistic, yet not antinomian, believers addressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews than one derived from Abram *the Hebrew*, in whom, on the one hand, all believers saw their father; whose act on the other hand acknowledges the superiority of the non-legalistic cult of the θεὸς ὑψιστος to the Levitical cult; and, finally, whose name²⁵ Ἐβραῖος περάτης furnishes the profoundest symbol for their own religious feeling?

If now, the persons addressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews applied to themselves, in this symbolic and allegorical sense the name Ἐβραῖοι, then traces of this must be discoverable in the epistle. According to the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is the religious ideal of the believers to depart from this world (αὕτη ἡ κτίσις, 9:11), from the visible (τὰ βλεπόμενα, 11:3), from the tangible (ψηλαφώμενον, 12:18), from the created and the mutable (σαλευόμενα, πεποιημένα, 12:27), and to enter into the fatherland, the heavenly city (11:14-16), into the true tabernacle (σκηνὴ ἀληθινή, 8:2), into the enduring city (ἡ τοὺς θεμελίους ἔχουσα πόλις), into the kingdom of the heavenly Jerusalem which cannot be moved (12:28, 22), into the invisible immaterial world (11:1, 27). This is not *one* ideal among others, but the central, religious ideal mission of mankind. Man's faith means his departure from sensuousness, from Egypt, and his entrance into the πατρίς. This faith consists in the trust in οὐ βλεπόμενα, and in τὸν ἀόρατον (11:1, 27) during the pilgrimage (11:13) through the visible world of shadows. The reward of this faith is the entrance into that eternal rest which God has prepared for his people.

²⁵ Cf. Ambrosius, *De Abrah.*, II, 1: "Abraham transitus dicitur;" and cf. *Ad Phil.*, c. 4, "immutata est litera propter sonum, ut non vocarentur Abraei sed Hebraei. Si enim origo ex Abraham est, ex ipso trahi debet nomen, non ex Heber." From such violence the Epistle to the Hebrews is indeed far removed, but not from such sentiment.

The type of such a believer, who has come out of the sensual into the supersensual world, is called by Philo in the Alexandrian speculation ὁ Ἑβραῖος. Concerning this, the best authority on the Philonic system of thought says:

The universal symbol for the elevation of the sensuous into the spiritual is the Ebraeus (περάτης²⁶). He is the pilgrim who turns from earthly to heavenly things.²⁷ Those who do this form a γένος οἷς ἔθος ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἐπὶ τὰ νοητὰ μετανίστασθαι²⁸

Since the Epistle to the Hebrews is concerned not only in a general way with the contrast between the sensuous and the supersensuous world, but since it also emphasises, especially in the hortatory portions, the "exodus," the "migration," the "transition," the "entering in," the "coming in," it follows that these very striking words, and this peculiar use of language, had a particular meaning and value for its readers.

Let me, then, call attention to those passages in which the use of these words (ἐξέρχεσθαι, ἔξοδος, ἐξαγαγεῖν, διαβαίνειν, διέρχεσθαι, εἰσέρχεσθαι, εἰσιέναι, εἴσοδος) is most striking and surprising. They have parallels in Philo, but not in the New Testament. Even εἰσέρχεσθαι, which occurs very frequently in other portions of the New Testament, never has its meaning determined by contrast with ἐξελεθεῖν.

Ἰησοῦς . . . ἔξω τῆς πύλης ἔπαθεν. τοίνυν ἐξερχώμεθα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς, τὸν ὀνειδισμὸν αὐτοῦ φέροντες· οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ὧδε μένουσαν πόλιν, ἀλλὰ τὴν μέλλουσαν ἐπιζητοῦμεν (13:12, 13).

Χριστὸς εἰσῆλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἅγια. οὐ γὰρ εἰς χειροποίητα εἰσῆλθεν ἅγια Χριστός, ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν, ὥσπερ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, εἰσέρχεσθαι κτλ. (9:12, 24, 25).

By this "entering in" Jesus passes *through* the veil. The veil is, however, a symbol of his flesh. Thus the whole course of Jesus' life in the flesh appears as a *passing through* (עבר). Thus we read (10:19, 20): [προσερχώμεθα], ἔχοντες παρρησίαν εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον, ἣν ἐνεκαίνισεν ἡμῖν ὁδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ. Beside εἰσέρχεσθαι, διέρχεσθαι is also found in this sense: ἔχοντες ἀρχιερέα μέγαν, διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς (4:16).

²⁶ How well adapted this name is for designating a religious association is shown by the sect of the Perates.

²⁷ Philo, *id.* Mangey, I, 439, *De migr. Abr.*, 4.

²⁸ Siegfried, *Philo von Alexandrien* (1875), p. 236.

The Old Testament prototype for this is, naturally, first and foremost the migrator Abraham;²⁹ ὑπήκουσεν ἐξελθεῖν εἰς τὸν τόπον ὃν ἤμελλε λαμβάνειν εἰς κληρονομίαν, καὶ ἐξῆλθε μὴ ἐπιστάμενος ποῦ ἔρχεται (11:8). Abraham's posterity were all ὁμολογήσαντες, ὅτι ξένοι καὶ παρεπίδημοί εἰσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. πατριδα ἐπιζητοῦσι (cf. 13:13).³⁰ They do not remember the land ἀφ' ἧς ἐξέβησαν, νῦν δὲ κρείττονος ὁρέγονται (11:14, 15). Where the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks, as here, of the *entrance into the πατρίς*, it does not refer to Abraham (who *went out* of his father's house), but (as Philo) to Jacob (Gen., 31:3), the ἀθλητῆς τέλειος.³¹ . . . who departs from Laban, the symbol of temporal possessions, into his fatherland concerning which we read, ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χώρᾳ καὶ γένος ἐστὶ σοι τὸ αὐτομαθές, τὸ αὐτοδίδακτον, τὸ νηπίας καὶ γαλακτώδους τροφῆς ἀμέτοχον.³²

The distinctly expressed wish of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that its readers may belong to this γένος (5:12-14). Joseph's significance is expressed thus: τελευτῶν περὶ τῆς ἐξόδου τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ἐμνημόνευσεν καὶ περὶ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ ἐνετείλατο (11:22). The "commandment concerning his bones" also implies an "exodus," By this he makes plain, so Philo teaches, that the contrast between earthly things (those of Egypt) and heavenly things (those of Canaan) has been revealed to him.³³ Whoever observes the choice of expression in the Epistle to the Hebrews will admit that he mentions the matter because his conception of it agrees with that of Philo.

Moses, too, belongs in a special sense to these pilgrims: πίστευι κατέλιπεν Αἴγυπτον (the *visible*) . . . τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον ὡς ὁρῶν ἐκαρτέρησεν (11:27). With this act, exactly as do those who go

²⁹ The whole eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews reads almost like a Christian paraphrase of the Philonian writing *De migratione Abrahami*.

³⁰ Beside the Epistle to the Hebrews, there is in the New Testament another epistle directed to παρεπίδημοι, viz., 1 Peter. Eusebius (*H. E.*, III, 4. 2) calls this an ἐπιστολή, ἐν ᾗ τοῖς ἐξ Ἑβραίων ὁσιν ἐν διασπορᾷ γράφει. It, too, then is probably an epistle to "Hebrews;" for the Ἑβραῖοι of Eusebius represents the παρεπίδημοι of the address.

³¹ For the comprehension of this original, basic idea of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is instructive that Philo applies the term τέλειος not only to the migrating Jacob, but also to the migrating Moses, in so far as he spreads his tent ἐξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς (τέλειος ἰκέτης καὶ θεραπευτής). Mangey, I, 221, *Quod det, pot. ins.*, 44.

³² Mangey, I, 441, *De migr. Abr.*, 6.

³³ Mangey, I, 439, *De migr. Abr.*, 4; cf. Siegfried, *loc. cit.*, p. 262.

forth *παρέξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς* to Christ who suffered *ἔξω τῆς πόλεως*, he takes upon himself the *ὀνειδισμὸς τοῦ χριστοῦ* (11:26 = 13:12).

Finally, the Epistle to the Hebrews naturally cannot avoid references to the *ἔξοδος* of God's people out of Egypt. *Πίστει διέβησαν τὴν ἔρυνθρὰν θάλασσαν* (11:29); and the old covenant is, according to Jeremiah, closed, *ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου* (8:9).

The "entering in" corresponds to the "exodus," *οἱ πρότερον εὐαγγελισθέντες οὐκ εἰσῆλθον δι' ἀπειθειαν*, 4:6. But the anchor of our hope is secure and firm, and *εἰσερχομένη εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσῆλθεν* Ἰησοῦς (6:19, 20). To all who pass from the visible into the invisible world, to the people of God—may we not say, to the "Hebrews?"—it is reserved *εἰσερχεσθαι εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν* (3:11, 18, 19; 4:1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 11).

Our purpose in this comparative study has now been attained:

1. In the epistle we find in largest measure those indirect symbolical references to the etymological meaning of the name *Ἑβραῖοι*, which we should expect to find in the case of a congregation which had consciously and intentionally assumed this name.

2. This name is attested by the earliest traditional form of the superscription of the epistle.

3. The lexicographical objections to the application of the name *Ἑβραῖοι*, not to the language and the nation, but to the religion only, have been met.

4. It will not, therefore, seem a wholly groundless conjecture that, the lost address of the Epistle to the Hebrews may have run

[*Πρίσκα καὶ Ἀκύλας, οἱ ἀδελφοί,*³⁴] *τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις ἐπισυναγωγῆς Ἑβραίων, τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις. χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη κτλ.*

5. From this address the traditional superscription has rightfully appropriated and thus preserved the fitting words *Πρὸς Ἑβραίους*.

³⁴ Acts 18:27, where Prisca and Aquila are called *οἱ ἀδελφοί*. But I may again point out that my defense of the genuineness of the superscription of the epistle of the need the support of Harnack's Prisca hypothesis. The brackets above are to indicate this.